

# The Condition of K-12 Public Education in Maine 2009

*Prepared for the  
Maine Education Policy Research Institute*

by

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UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTHERN MAINE**

Center for Education  
Policy, Applied Research,  
and Evaluation

Dear Maine Citizen,

We are pleased to present you with the twelfth edition of ***The Condition of K-12 Public Education in Maine***. This book is designed to provide Maine citizens, legislators, and educators a yearly report on the state of Maine public schools and education. This new edition updates educational information which appeared in earlier editions, and also provides information on several new topics.

In 1995, the Maine State Legislature established the Maine Education Policy Research Institute, a joint institute funded by the Legislature and the University of Maine System. Under the direction of the Institute's Steering Committee, the Institute is charged with developing a system for monitoring the progress of Maine K-12 public education, and for conducting policy and research studies. You will find the names of the Steering Committee members and the University of Southern Maine Institute staff listed on a subsequent page, and a copy of the legislation establishing the Institute in Appendix A.

Many individuals provide us assistance in compiling information for this report, and they are listed in the Acknowledgments. We thank them for their assistance.

We hope you find the information in this book helpful. If you have any questions about the information in this report, please feel free to contact us at the address on this letterhead or by electronic mail.

Sincerely,

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## Staff

The Staff section provides characteristics of Teachers and Administrators in schools statewide.

This section provides information on the following indicators:

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## 14. Student - Teacher Ratios

One indication of how school resources are used is in terms of student – teacher ratios. The student – teacher ratio is calculated by dividing the total number of students enrolled in public schools by the total number of full-time equivalent teachers. The teacher count consists of full-time teachers who are classroom teachers, special education teachers, specialist teachers of reading/literacy, itinerant teachers, and speech and hearing clinicians. Statewide student – teacher ratios in Maine in 2006-07 is 11.6 students to one teacher.

Student – teacher ratios vary throughout Maine from a low of 9.5 to one in Hancock and Sagadahoc Counties to a high of 12.5 to one in York County. Figure 15 shows student – teacher ratios for each county in 2005-06. **Note:** This information was unable to be updated due to a change in the data collection methods at the Maine Department of Education.

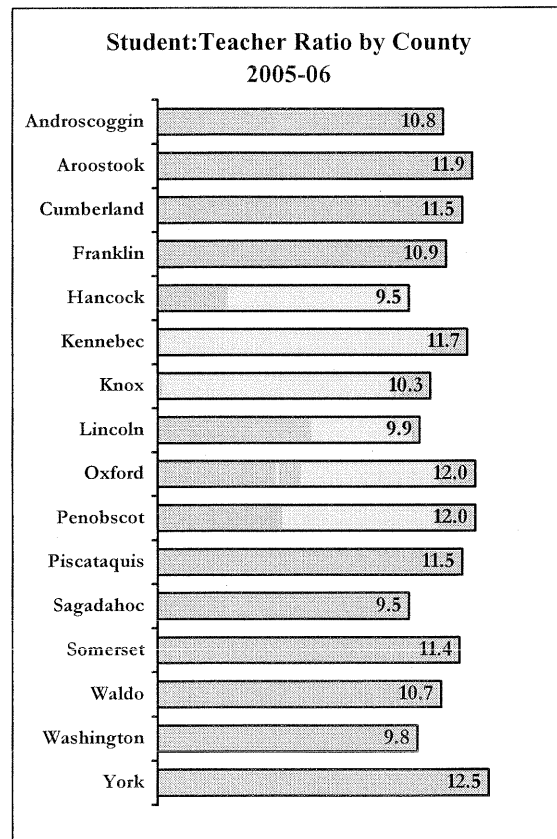


Figure 15: Source: Maine Department of Education, 2006.

## 15. Staff – Administrator Ratios and Teacher – Staff Ratios

Staff to administrator ratios is also an indication of how school resources are used. The following table shows numbers of staff and the ratio for the 2007-08 school year. Records from the Maine Department

**Table 13: Staff to Administrator Ratios**

Category	2007-08
Total Full-time Staff	34,868
Administrators (FTE)	1,354
Staff/Administrator Ratio	25.8:1

Source: Maine Department of Education, 2008.

of Education show that in 2007-08 each administrator was responsible, on average, for approximately 25 staff members. Administrators include superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, curriculum coordinators, directors of transportation, business administrators, supervisors of instruction, directors and assistant directors of vocational education, as well as directors and assistant directors of services for exceptional children.

The proportion of total instructional school staff that is comprised of teachers is a measure of how school budgets break down in direct education services to students. For this purpose instructional staff includes teachers, principals, supervisors, and various other non-supervisory staff at the school level. The data in Figure 16 shows how Maine compared with other New England states and the United States in the proportion of total public school instructional staff who were classroom teachers in school year 2006-07. As shown in the chart below, Maine exceeded New Hampshire and Vermont slightly, however, fell below the national and New England averages of 87.4 and 86.2 percent respectively.

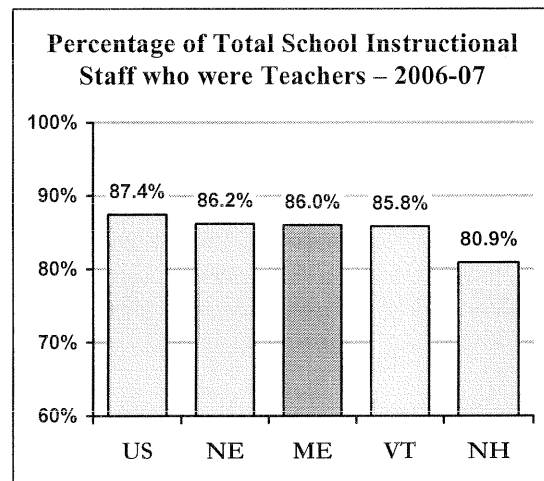


Figure 16: Source: National Education Association, 2007.

## 16. Salaries of Teachers and Administrators

As reported in Table 14 and Figure 17, classroom teacher salaries in Maine increased 30.6 percent (not adjusted for inflation) since 1999-00 to an average salary of \$46,462 in 2008-09. According to the National Education Association in 2006-07 Maine ranked 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation compared to the national average of \$50,816. Maine ranked last among the New England States: Connecticut ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> nationally (\$60,822); Massachusetts 4<sup>th</sup> (\$58,624); Rhode Island 8<sup>th</sup> (\$55,956); Vermont 19<sup>th</sup> (\$48,090); and New Hampshire 23<sup>rd</sup> (\$48,310).

In Maine, the average salary for full-time principals has increased 35.2 percent (not adjusted for inflation) since 1999-00 to \$74,582 in 2008-09. The average salary for full-time superintendents in 2008-09 was not available at the time of this printing but was \$111,732 in 2007-08 which represents an increase of 53.3 percent since 1999-00 (not adjusted for inflation).

However, when adjusted for inflation, average salaries of Maine teachers and principals remained relatively flat in the last decade. Teachers' average inflation adjusted salaries increased by only 2.5 percent and principals' increased by 6 percent in 2008-09. Superintendent's inflation adjusted salaries have increased 23% from 1999-00 to 2007-08.

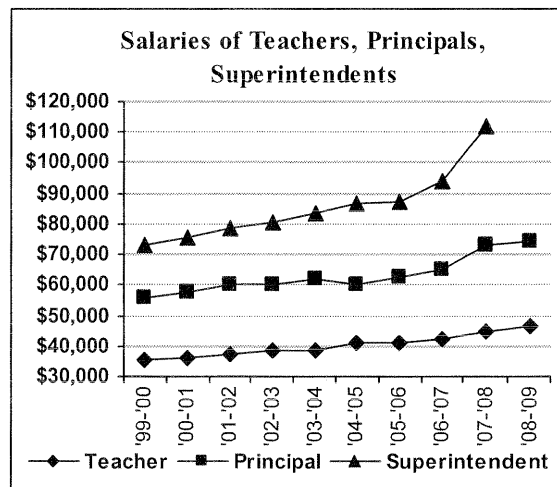


Figure 17: Source: Maine Department of Education, 2008.

Table 14: Average Salaries of Maine's Teachers, Full-Time Principals, & Superintendents

Category	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Teacher	\$35,561	\$36,373	\$37,300	\$38,518	\$38,864	\$40,921	\$40,856	\$42,103	\$44,800	\$46,462
Principal	\$55,184	\$57,693	\$59,975	\$60,388	\$61,960	\$60,171	\$62,839	\$65,299	\$73,150	\$74,582
Superintendent	\$72,902	\$75,845	\$78,595	\$80,543	\$83,650	\$86,940	\$87,568	\$94,142	\$111,732	n/a

Source: Maine Department of Education, 2008.

## 17. Ages of Teachers and Administrators

According to the Maine Department of Education, in 2008-09, 66.4 percent of Maine's teachers were over 40 years of age, 24.9 percent were between the ages of 40 and 49, and 34.1 percent were between the ages of 50 and 59. Figure 18 shows the percent of teachers by age group in 2008-09.

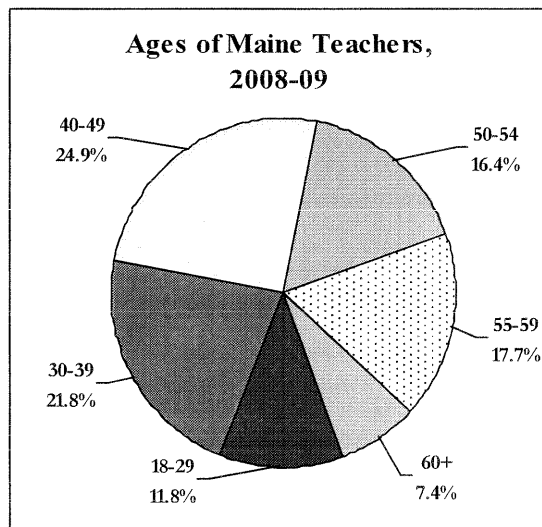


Figure 18: Source: Maine Department of Education, 2008.

In 2008-09, almost ninety percent (89.3) of Maine superintendents and principals were over 40 years of age as shown in Figure 19. A breakdown of the data shows that 29.3 percent of these administrators were between the ages of 40-49, while 49.3 percent were between the ages of 50 and 59.

This data indicates that a high percentage of teachers and administrators are approaching retirement, a demographic factor which has possible implications for school funding, retirement costs, and availability of administrative professionals.

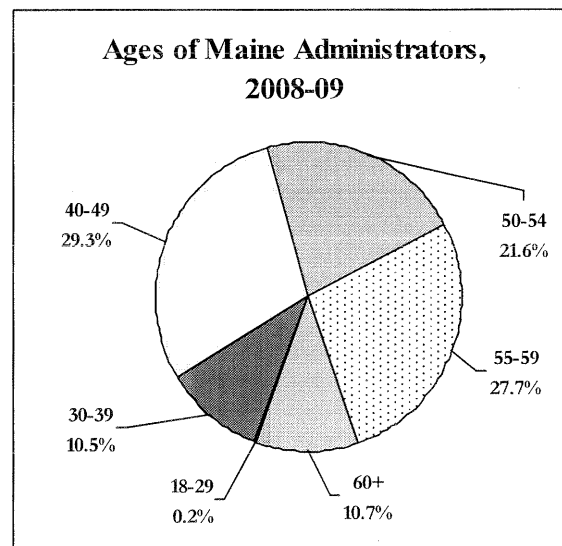


Figure 19: Source: Maine Department of Education, 2008.

## 18. Years of Experience of Teachers and Administrators

In 2008-09, the largest portion of Maine's full-time teacher work force (43.6 percent) had 19 or more years of experience. There has been little change in this statistic since 1999-00, but a significant change since the early nineties when only 28.5 percent of teachers in 1990-91 had 19 or more years of experience. This contrasts with the number of teachers who were relatively new to teaching in 2008-09; 16.2 percent of the

work force, had 0-5 years of experience, as shown in Table 15 and Figure 20.

The Maine Department of Education reported, in 2008-09, that Maine principals and superintendents also had considerable experience in education, with 77.4 percent having 19 or more years of experience in the education profession and 19.1 percent having between 11 and 18 years of experience, as shown in Figure 21.

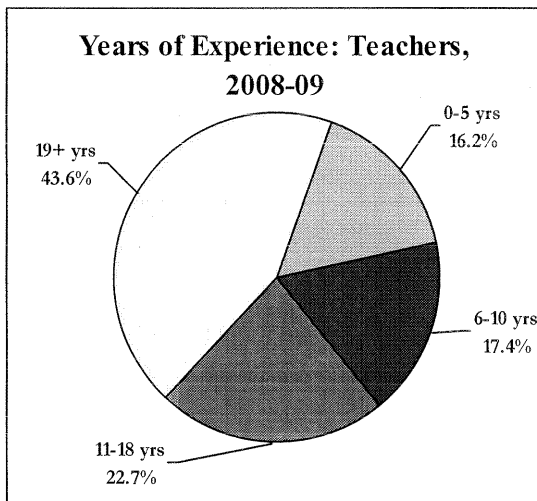


Figure 20: Source: Maine Department of Education, 2008.

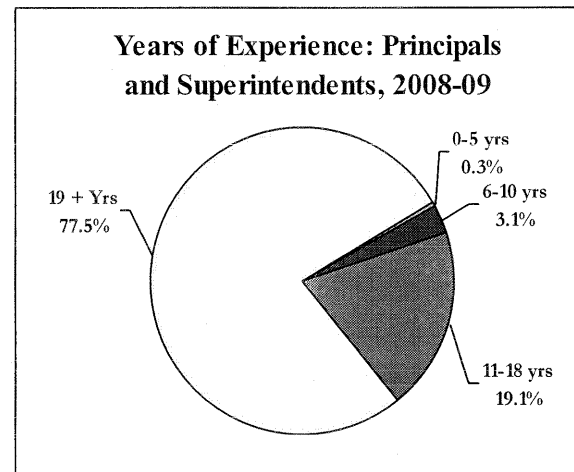


Figure 21: Source: Maine Department of Education, 2008.

Table 15: Teaching Experience in Maine 2002-03 to 2008-09

School Year	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-18 years	19+ years	Total Full-time Teachers
2002-03	20.1%	15.0%	23.0%	41.9%	16,270
2003-04	19.6%	15.4%	23.1%	41.8%	17,153
2004-05	18.1%	16.4%	22.6%	42.9%	15,996
2005-06	18.2%	17.3%	22.6%	41.9%	17,779
2006-07	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2007-08	17.3%	17.6%	22.0%	43.0%	16,971
2008-09	16.2%	17.4%	22.7%	43.6%	15,376

Source: Maine Department of Education, 2008.



## 19. Gender of Teachers and Administrators

The proportion of female to male teachers in Maine has shifted only slightly since 1998-99 when 70 percent were female and 30 percent were male. In 2008-09, 74 percent of teachers were female and 26 percent male. However, if one looks at *elementary* teachers, one sees a wider discrepancy according to gender, as shown in Figure 22.

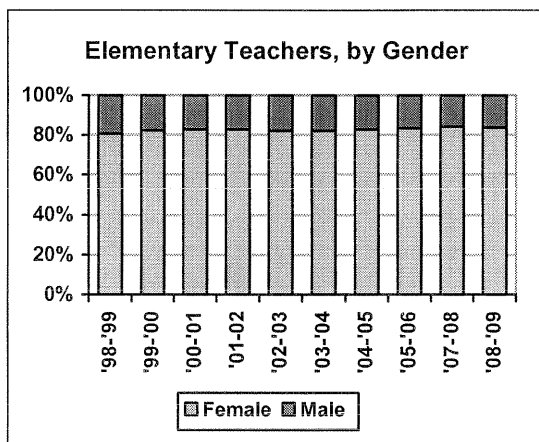


Figure 22: Source: Maine Department of Education, 2008.

In 1998-99, 80.6 percent of all *elementary* school teachers were female, while 51.7 percent of all *secondary* school teachers were male. In 2008-09, 83.8 percent of all *elementary* school teachers were female, while 47.2 percent of all *secondary* school teachers were male. Between 1998-99 and 2008-09, the proportion of male elementary teachers decreased from 19.4 percent to 16.2 percent. Of more than ten thousand elementary

teachers, only 1,646 are male. Figure 23 shows a relatively even split between male and female *secondary* teachers.

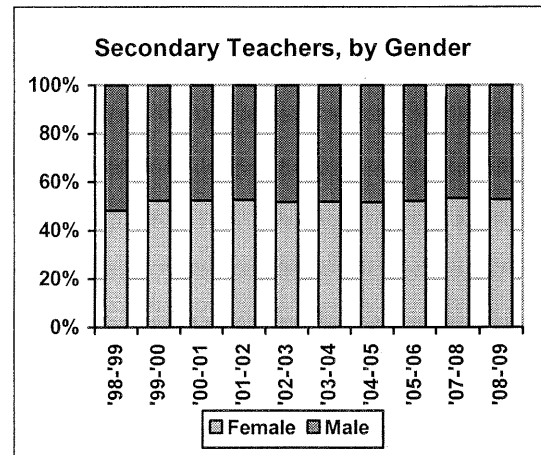


Figure 23: Source: Maine Department of Education, 2008.

In terms of administrative staff, the Maine Department of Education reported that in 2008-09, 23 percent of superintendents and 51.4 percent of principals were female, continuing the steady increase from the 6.0 percent reported in 1990-91.

## 20. Educational Attainment of Teachers and Administrators

The National Education Association reported that in fiscal year 2001, the most recent available national data, 56 percent of public school teachers nationwide had a bachelor's degree, while 43 percent had attained master's degrees. One percent of teachers nationwide had doctorates.

In 2008-09, 40.1 percent of all teachers in Maine reported that their highest level of educational attainment was a bachelor's degree, while 10.1 percent had attained 15 credit hours beyond the bachelor's. Another 9.4 percent had attained 30 hours of credit beyond the bachelor's, and an additional 28 percent had attained a master's degree. Those who had attained

credits beyond the master's degree equaled 9.1 percent. Finally, 1.5 percent had a certificate of advanced study and 0.5 percent had a doctorate, as shown in Table 16.

According to the Maine Department of Education, 43 percent of Maine's principals and superintendents held master's degrees as their highest level of study, 23 percent had attained either master's plus 15 or master's plus 30 credit hours, 21 percent had achieved the certificate of advanced study, and 7 percent held doctorates in 2008-09, as shown in Table 17.

**Table 16: Educational Attainment of Teachers, 2008-09**

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Full-time Teachers</b>
Less than bachelor's degree	1.1%
Bachelor's degree	40.1%
Bachelor's degree +15 hours	10.1%
Bachelor's degree +30 hours	9.4%
Master's degree	28.0%
Credits beyond master's	9.1%
Certificate of advanced study	1.5%
Doctorate	0.5%

Source: Maine Department of Education, 2008.

**Table 17: Educational Attainment of Administrators, 2008-09**

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Administrators</b>
Bachelor's degree	2.3%
Bachelor's degree +15 hours	2.3%
Bachelor's degree +30 hours	1.7%
Master's degree	43.0%
Master's degree +15, +30 hours	23.0%
Certificate of advanced study	21.0%
Doctorate	7.0%

Source: Maine Department of Education, 2008.

# What Teachers Need

Research into why teachers leave the profession is helping lawmakers craft better policies to hold onto them.



BY MICHELLE EXSTROM

**T**odd Allen, a young, enthusiastic special education teacher, was living his lifelong dream of working in an urban school. In his first three years, he was optimistic about his career. He felt he was making a difference in the lives of his students.

But after his fourth year of teaching, things changed. Allen became disillusioned by the ever-mounting federal and state administrative requirements for special education and the disappearance of aides. He left his hard-to-staff position and went into fifth grade general education.

Dustin Kramer faced similar frustration. He was a middle school social studies teacher in his rural home town, but after seven years grew frustrated with a disengaged principal who rarely visited his classroom and made

little effort to enforce appropriate student behavior. He felt a similar lack of support from his superintendent. He often worked late hours and questioned whether it was all worth only \$37,000 per year. Kramer ended up leaving teaching to try his hand as a financial adviser.

While frustrated employees often look for new jobs, teachers are of particular concern because new and veteran teachers are leaving in large numbers, and many older teachers will soon be retiring.

"Teacher turnover is not cost free. We have long recognized this in the private sector, and now we need to recognize this in the public education sector as well," says Richard Ingersoll, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. "There are significant costs associated with recruiting, inducting, mentoring and training new hires."

Researchers have long conducted national studies to understand why teachers leave the profession. A new effort, however, is

focusing on studies at the state and district level that lawmakers say is giving them new insights into why teachers quit.

At least 10 states have made these efforts in the last two years and have found some surprises, including that low salaries are not the top reason teachers leave.

## A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Ingersoll has reported that about one-third of new teachers leave the classroom within the first three years, and as many as half leave after just five years. And a new report from the National Commission on Teacher and America's Future predicts that as many as 50 percent will retire over the upcoming decade. School districts all over the country struggle, in particular, to get and keep math, science and special education teachers.

Using a national survey of school personnel conducted by the U.S. Department of Education in 2000-2001, Ingersoll found several factors for dissatisfied teachers: too little

*Michelle Exstrom tracks teaching quality issues for NCSL.*

## CENTER SEEKS BEST POLICIES FOR TEACHERS

preparation time, heavy teaching load, poor salary and benefits, and a lack of say in factors that affect teaching and student achievement. Other researches found similar results.

"Most of these results are pretty common sense," says Ingersoll. "Nothing is really too surprising. This confirms what we all might guess."

State lawmakers, however, wanted more specific information about why teachers were leaving jobs in their states.

In 2002, North Carolina policymakers became the first to design a survey to ask educators about their working conditions, under the direction of Governor Mike Easley and the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission. The survey was sent out to every licensed public school educator in the state. In spring 2008, North Carolina repeated the survey for the fourth time, with 87 percent of the state's educators completing it and making school-specific data available for every one of the state's traditional public schools.

"We knew we had a teacher shortage and didn't fully understand why we couldn't get enough teachers or keep the ones we had," says Representative Maggie Jeffus, a retired educator and strong supporter of the survey.

Jeffus thinks the survey gave lawmakers a better handle on how to hold onto teachers.

North Carolina Representative Rick Glazier admits he was skeptical. He had concerns about the integrity of the data and thought the survey might be more about PR than substance. But now he's a believer. "Information is what legislators operate on, and this is great currency for us."

### OTHER STATES JOIN IN

Other states have created their own studies as well. In partnership with the National Education Association and Eric Hirsch of the New Teacher Center, six states and one district—Alabama, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, West Virginia and the Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia—

While concern about the loss of good teachers is emerging as a top concern for lawmakers, a group in California has been grappling with the issue since the late 1980s.

The New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz, Calif., has primarily focused its work on developing policies and programs for strong mentoring and induction programs to support beginning teachers. Research shows that a high-quality program improves the quality of teaching and retention rates among teachers in their first few years.

To complement this work, the center also is now focusing on teaching and learning conditions. They believe healthy teaching and learning conditions are building blocks for an environment where teachers and students can reach their full potential.

They are working with one of the top experts in the country on this issue, Eric Hirsch, to survey teachers about their working conditions and to analyze the results for recommendations to state and local policymakers. Since this partnership began in 2007, 10 states and one school district have embarked on this effort.

Hirsch and the New Teacher Center believe this work will lead states to important teaching reform.

"It's not just about finding the right people to staff our nation's classrooms, but providing them with teaching conditions that allow them to do their best work," he says. "Positive teaching conditions, where educators are supported and empowered, are essential to creating schools where teachers want to work and students thrive."

developed and distributed their own surveys in 2008. They heard back from more than 350,000 educators at almost 10,000 schools. And Colorado, Maryland and Vermont surveyed educators this year.

The short online surveys are tailored to individual states and districts to ensure their relevance with current initiatives and priorities. Yet there are standard questions in all the surveys to allow for comparisons. The survey results are used to improve schools, never to punish them.

"Teachers now feel a part of the process," says Glazier. "This survey allows them to be heard and provide input, but preserves their anonymity."

Kansas Senator John Vratil agrees. "It's always important for any employer to seek feedback from employees about what improvements need to be made and what improves morale."

### EDUCATORS ARE TEACHING LAWMAKERS

Educators have consistently indicated that

they need:

- ◆ Supportive school leadership
- ◆ Engaged community and parents
- ◆ A safe environment
- ◆ Sufficient facilities
- ◆ Enough time to plan and collaborate
- ◆ High-quality professional development
- ◆ An atmosphere of trust and respect
- ◆ Effective school improvement teams
- ◆ Appropriate assignments and workload.

When these needs are met, research shows teachers stay and students achieve at higher levels. And when these needs are not met, teachers leave more often and student scores are low.

In Alabama, teachers also reported that these factors, more than high salaries, influenced their decision to work in a low-performing school.

These results indicate school success and educator satisfaction cannot always be measured by counting computers, class sizes, calendar days and salaries. It's more about the quality of the work environment.

"With our results, we'll be able to pick



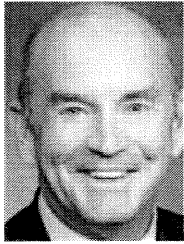
**REPRESENTATIVE**  
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**REPRESENTATIVE**  
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**SENATOR**  
**JOHN VRATIL**  
**KANSAS**



**REPRESENTATIVE**  
**MICHAEL MERRIFIELD**  
**COLORADO**

low-hanging fruit that we might not otherwise have known would make such a difference,” says Colorado Representative Michael Merrifield, an educator for 30 years. “We might even address these challenges with a minimal fiscal impact.”

In most states, the survey also has given state and local policymakers the opportunity to work together toward a common reform agenda. At the state level, legislators, teacher associations, agency leaders and the governor have used the results to support stronger, more effective education policy, improve current programs, and provide information to support future school initiatives. The survey data also have provided an important opportunity for local district and building leaders

to identify strengths and areas for improvement and create plans to meet their special needs.

In North Carolina, the four surveys have led policymakers to support strong school leaders and better working conditions. They’ve identified teacher recruitment and retention as a key problem they need to solve. They also put more effort into principal and teacher preparation programs, and evaluations for principals that include working conditions.

Jeffus also sponsored legislation to require schools to carve out more free time for teachers to plan and collaborate.

Glazier says the data gave legislators a new perspective.

“This helps us to understand that teacher retention isn’t all about the money,” he says, “and highlights noneconomic issues that we can address—issues that we intuitively may know, but teachers now confirm.”

Vratil is less optimistic, however, about the effect in Kansas. He believes the survey results were less surprising and have not led to much change in teacher policy.

#### INFORMATION A PRIORITY

Despite budget restraints, many state legislators feel that getting this kind of information is too important not to fund the surveys. The Colorado General Assembly funded the surveys while repealing most other education reforms passed during the 2008 session.

“This survey will help policymakers without education experience to understand the challenges in the classroom—how difficult it really is and how unneeded and unnecessary mandates affect the teachers,” Merrifield says. “This is an opportunity to open some eyes.”

The North Carolina legislature is facing a similar debate over future studies of working conditions. With a severe budget shortfall, some argue that money for future surveys should be cut. Glazier has made strong arguments, however, for maintaining funding.

“For a relatively small investment of \$215,000 every other year, this gives us school-level detail, and gives teachers the opportunity to be heard,” he says. “This is a great investment that just makes sense. There’s really no downside.”

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**Austin, Texas** (meeting jointly)  
Leadership Staff Section (LSS)

Legislative Information &  
Communications Staff (LINCS)

**September 9-12, 2009**  
**Austin, Texas**  
National Association of Legislative  
Information Technology (NALIT)

**September 16-20, 2009**  
**Seattle, Washington**  
American Society of Legislative Clerks  
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**September 20-25, 2009**  
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